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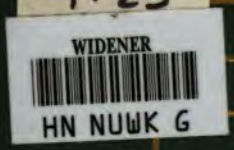

CHIMALMAN

GRACE E. TAFT

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OF NEW YORK

1918

CHIMALMAN,
AND OTHER POEMS

BY

GRACE ELLIS TAFT

Author of "Cayuga Notes," former correspondent of "American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal," and Member International Congress of Americanists, and American Anthropological Association

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NEW YORK
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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER

MARY HALL TAFT

A stela of Palenqué bears the glyphic of its king,
So evermore on childhood's thought a mother's touches cling:
She fashions into miracles the life's primeval clay,
And carves to its enraptured prime the idol of her day;
Thy love restores the lens of truth, to concentrate in one,
Beams hidden in the dusty air, still golden from the sun!

(New York, April 4, 1916.)

FOREWORD

The sweet idyllic story of "Chimalman" is unique among Indian myths, being absolutely native to Mexican folk-history, from their genesis in north-central Mexico about the year 700 A. D. When conquest brought Christian history into this mission field, the Jesuit and Franciscan fathers were greatly astounded by the similarity of this tale to the beautiful religious version of the Virgin Mary's life. Their belief was that the "Chimalman" story was a grotesque perversion of some Biblical narrative caught from the lips of an educated white captive; but later investigation proves it to be an original Mexican idea, nearly a thousand years old at the time of the Spanish conquest. It is only given in brief in any books at the author's disposal, and she has read much in both public and private libraries. All characters have been the creation of the author's fancy, except the general idea of "Chimalman" and the identity of the deities of the Aztec pantheon. The plan of this series of tiny plays, is to introduce a single scene in the life of the god Quetzalcoatl in each one; and a further series of plays, already begun, will complete this Quetzalcoatl Cycle in a dozen playlets, with connecting lyrics to complete the idea. Three only of these plays are included in the present volume.

ROSE DE VAUX-ROYER.

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CHIMALMAN

List of Characters

Chimalman, "*The Green Shield,*" *youngest.*
Temictli, "*The Dream,*" *second.*
Tlilli, "*Black,*" *eldest.*
} *Sisters, dwelling in Tulan.*

Tecpancaltzin, "*Lord of the Ruling House,*" *king of Tulan.*

Citlalatonac, "*The Morning Star, known also as Tonacatecutli,* "*Lord of Life.*"
Quetzalcoatl, "*The Feathered Serpent,*" *his son, who has fallen from Paradise for disobedience.*
} *Aztec gods.*

Scene: In Tulan, a forest glade, below the palace of Palpan.

(*Enter three Aztec sisters.*)

Temictli. (*Sings.*)

Shortens the ceiba's shadow
On meadows of the sun,
And chirimoya branches
Bear white bells every one;

Forth comes the King of Tulan
In gold all glistening,
That like the sunbeam sparkles,
To greet the Sun, our King!
Forth comes the King of Tulan,
Resplendent in his pride,
To greet his Sire supernal
By whom he is deified;
Beneath the chirimoya
And ceiba's fringy tent,
His trembling tribal children
Join in the sacrament!

TLILLI. Here let us drain the chirimoya's fount
Of fragrance; till our spirits drowse upon
The warming breezes, like those flower-bells
Wherefrom the wings of morning-dew have fled
Before the flocking sunbeams, and the flight
Of broad-winged butterflies as bright as they:
Upward, the leafless forest crowds, with lure
Of white and golden blossoms on the bare
Outstretching limbs the changing year re-clothes,
Above the hedge, whose sheltering gown infolds
The flowery garden from a stranger's eye,
And our thatched cottage only overpeeps
Entwining bushes to assure us safe.

CHIMALMAN. Within the hedge the sweetest roses blow.

TEM. Along the open highway glides my gaze
To the broad terrace throning Tulan's king;
Rarer the blossoms cherished at Palpan.

CHIM. Upon the wayside, thorns and pebbles lie,
And many paces stretch from here to there.
TL. Sisters! Along the palace steps, a flock
Of maids, attired and tongued like paroquets
Shrieking across the carven gateway's gods,
Bear a long chain of buckets, from the lake;
And others writhe like monkeys, back and forth,
Naked and dripping, till the stones are scoured
White as Iztaccihuatl's coverlet,
Worthy to face the glories of the sun.

TEM. (*Sings.*)
Adobe walls my father's house;
Of rushes is our roof entwined;
But for the King of Tulan's spouse
A spacious mansion is designed:
Of feathers from a tinted bird,
Her mantle is; gold-hung, her gown;
Ah! might some kindly god afford
To change, for hers, my robe of brown!

CHIM. (*Sings.*)
Her roses climb a marble wall,
A simple trellis bears my flowers;
She listens to the fountain's call,
The mountain brook delights my hours!
The golden chains of high estate
Confine her to a small demesne;
Fetterless as a bird's, my fate!
I would not change for Tulan's queen!

TEM. Contented one, not empty fancy fills
My head, with dizzy joy anticipant;
For Ochpaniztli, summer's festival,
Discovered me to the discerning eye
Of Tecpancaltzin, Tulan's sovereign.
The black-haired one, our elder sister here,
Was of the mother-queen's attendant maids,
And I among the dancers drew his gaze
By that soft mien that won my name "The Dream"!
You, little one, too young for palace pride,
Saw not the look, nor heard his words of praise:
Who says, Temictli should not thence aspire,
"Fairest of maids," by Tulan's king declared?
A thousand roses should delight you then,
Dear Chimalman, as sister of the queen!

CHIM. Ah, is it so, then? Shadow of destiny,
Blight not our garden, prithee! but depart!

(*Sings.*)

Hast thou been far? How should I say?
With me art thou, asleep or awake,
Painting my dreams; and my eardrops betray,
Thy trembling image, my life-pulses shake.

TEM. Were it but you, how true your words would be.

CHIM. Home-roses please my heart. No canker eats
Their tender petals by court jealousies.

TL. What will the roses say, if dewy mouths
Twinning their sweetness, hearts disclose of gall?
If Tecpancaltzin truly should observe

The beauty of Temictli, pleasant would
Our duty be, to doubly honor her
As sister cherished and as queen adored.

(*Sings.*)

Climbing the cliff, I thee beheld one perfect hour,
Lovely as myrtle by my side!
My heart thou pluckest, as I pluck a flower!
Alas, our onward paths divide!
Mine only is the memory, maiden dear!
Where fall thy footsteps, love shall follow near!

TEM. (*Speaks.*)

Solid as any epitaph my facts,
Although you flout them. Should I further go,
To state what glances and what messages
Revolved in buzzing circles round my charms,—
But Chimalman is dreaming! Tlilli laughs!
For sympathy, commend myself to gods!

TL. Look to the chirimoya for your peer,
Temictli, even within your sisters' eyes,
Sated with charm familiar; but the queen
Of Tulan by her sovereign nature rules.
If, in your bosom, thoughts magnanimous
Temper the fires of pride, and constancy
Steadies the arm of resolution 'gainst
Assaults of flattery and self-regard,—
Such queenly nature might demand a king:
Spoil not our pleasure with unreason's frown;
Friends give one softer state, than a thousand slaves.

(*Sings.*)

A queen's heart must a palace be
Fair of design;
Not lovelier in symmetry
Its outward line,
Than in perspective of bright rooms
For regal state,
Dim chambers and mysterious glooms
Love-consecrate;
A throne for the judiciary
Of courtiers' care;
A charming nest, where melody
May friends ensnare;
A chapel,—where the queen resides,
God-reconciled;
And many a pretty corner bides,
Soft for a child!
So various must her nature be
For sovereign might;
A palace beautiful, is she
In the king's sight!

TEM. Ah, but the bright eye lures the bird withal;
And eagle-wings, shiningest locks entangle!

(*Sings.*)

Pattern of kingliness, he!
Voice like a roar of the sea,
Storm-cloud the jet of his hair,
Lightning his glances declare;

Where may the equal serene
Find, for such kingship, a queen?

Cheek of magnolia bloom,
Eyes deep as midforest gloom,
Foot of the antelope fleet,
Throat of the canyon wren sweet;
Brave-heart his power disowns,
Beauty beside him enthrones.

Frail as the maguey flower
Sword-leaves encircle in power,
She by his sovereignty held,
He by her loveliness quelled;
Honeys of maguey, her charm
Soon may the conqueror disarm!

Tl. Did Meconetzin, piercing the tough rind
First, at the root of that tall waving plume
Of cloudlike blossom, taste its secret sweet
And drive all revellers with mezcal mad,
Merely that parrot-shrieking vanity
Might, in such likeness, self intoxicate?
Still in Palpan, the throne's unoccupied,
And rich in ancestry alone are we.

(*Sings.*)
Whiteness of dawn up the parapet ran
Of that fortress of ancientry, fabled Aztlan!
Their myriads out-peopling the fields of their sires,

Arose the rude Aztecs, ere daylight expires:
Beyond their White City, by forest and stream,
They followed to eastward, the lure of a dream;
Borne on the bosom of Lake Chapallan,
Too soon were they parted from mother Aztlan.

The Hummingbird-god and his sister led on;
Till, discord unknotting a clan's unison,
Popocatepetl, enthroned in the clouds,
Frowned down from his smoke-wreaths on quarreling
crowds:
Through a fair verdant valley, his sister forsook
The brother whose dearness her city's name spoke;
But brother Mexitl the mountains o'erran,
And settled his folk on the plain of Tulan.

Oh, Place of the Sun! By the hand of a god
Were thy hesitant tribes weaned from older abode,
To the shining Atoyac meandering below
The Hill of the Serpents, whose battlements show
Pie-colored and gay as the hummingbird wing
That emblems Mexitl, their founder and king,—
Thou, Huitzilopochtli! more godhead than man,
Whose foresight provided our palace, Palpan.

Tem. Palpan, the many-colored paradise,
Whose rainbow walls and sculpture-guarded gates
Beguile fantastic dreams from humdrum toil,—
There might a slave kneel by a sandstone mill
Grinding my bread, as I reclined at ease.

TL. Lazy Temictli, turn those busy eyes
Upon our gate; this labor you enjoy
To gaze abroad! Now, tell what stranger comes.
TEM. Taller than Tecpancaltzin, our great king,
Shining of countenance, reverend of mien
As high-priest of Mexitl,—I admire
Some prince approaching! On his will, await!
TL. Down to the wicket, sisters, fleetly go!

(*Exit Tlilli and Temictli.*)

CHIM. Kings have no import on a morning fair,
And the hummingbird flickers emerald through my flowers;
Drink at the lily's cup, sweet messenger
Of deity, and tell me of thy lord.

(*Sings.*)

Say, red rose! Which of the spirits kissed
Thee into being, whom knew I not yestre'en?
Which of the stars condescends to assist
Thee, white rose, to become a star terrene?
Butterfly, resting upon the bush, I pray
Is it thy wing that waves in the yellow rose-spray?
(*Speaks.*) Aye! but I shiver; for the motmot skims
Into the covert, as though refuge seeking
And a hawklike hovering cloud, pausing a moment,
Steals from my flowers their gorgeous coloration.
When Tlaloc lifts his vase again, is season
Enough for thee! Fly, cloud, and leave the sun
Shining again upon his Toltec child.
And yet, a fear more tangible than cloud,

Drives me to follow motmot to his lair;
How very soft the zephyr! Yet, I tremble!

(*Enter Quetzalcoatl, floating as a spirit in the air, unseen to the mortal maid.*)

QUETZALCOATL. (*Singing.*)

Xochitlycacan!
How far from thy gate
Thy son is exiled,
The plaything of fate!
How dull and abhorred
Are flowers of Tulan
Compared to thy blooms,
Xochitlycacan!

Xochitlycacan!
The Place of the Rose!
What evil impelled
My pranking jocose?
Forbidden the tree,
I laughed at the ban
And plucked of thy flowers,
Xochitlycacan!

Xochitlycacan!
The paradise blest
With only one law,
Our Father's behest;
Four brothers were we
Who the heavens o'erran,

Till I stumbled from grace,
Xochitlycacan!

Xochitlycacan!
Divinities dwell
Serene in thy shade,
Who never rebel;
I wander forlorn,
Neither godhead nor man,
And long for thy bliss,
Xochitlycacan!

Xochitlycacan!
One rose have I hid
More golden of heart,
More fragrance bespread,
More brilliant of hue
Than these of Tulan;
It fades in earth-air,
Xochitlycacan!

CHIM. Oh, but a dream of Paradise is mine;
A great and shining rose floats in the air
Like a comet, whose fragrant exhalation drowns
Every odor of my starlike older flowers!
What here portends? Paradise touches earth!
Within my hands I lift thee, loveliness
Celestial! whose sweet odors drown my fears.
A weakness of sweet ecstacy overcomes me!
Sisters, I tremble! Sisters, return! Wherefore
Do I know the gods are near, yet see them not?

(*Enter Citlalatonac, the god shadowing through his human semblance; on either side, the sisters Tlilli and Temictli advance, with adoring gestures.*)

TL. Where plucked you, Chimalman, that wondrous flower,
Overfraught love torn from captivity!

TEM. Ah, but she must have stolen it from the king!
Have you a lover then, and tell us not?

CHIM. No lover is mine, although all-loving I.

TL. Pardon, good sir, our unpremeditated
Words; for such flowers bloomed not here before.

CIT. This flower must have grown in Paradise.

CHIM. I breathe of Paradise, enfolding it;
Now am I blest, and do not need to die.

TEM. If gods hear blasphemy of Chimalman,
Not Tonaca-tecutli, the forgiving,
Even would show compassion for her sin.

CHIM. The Lord of Life delights in worshippers;
Who love his handiwork, himself they love.

TL. Welcome the stranger with a gift, my sister;
He comes from far Aztlan. Give him the rose.
Hasten, Temictli, for a draught of pulque,
Him to refresh who seeks our mighty king.
The rose, Chimalman!

(*Temictli disappears into cottage-doorway.*)

CHIM. Paradise, lost to me?
Farewell, dear rose! Sir, pray accept the flower.

CIT. More paradise blossoms by sowing paradise
In another's hand. This you will not regret.

(*Temictli re-enters, carrying cup and pottery ewer on her shoulder.*)

TEM. Golden the cup which at Palpan is lifted
At the king's carouse; but in our earthen mug
Dwells the same distillation blessing us.
They say Tezcatlipoca, the twin god,
Laid bare the maguey's secret to our sire,
Great Meconetzin, lately Tulan's king:
Heard you the song, that a pulque-inebriate
Poet went chanting, from the king's high feast?

(*Sings.*)

Who is the goddess of glistening hair,
Within the maguey hedge,
Against the Toltec's following prayer,
Raising a leaf's sword-edge?
Nymph of the desert or dark ravine,
Enshrined among the rocks,
She shuns the daylight's prying keen,
Shaking her milkwhite locks;
But faces soft the rising moon,
Tezcatlipoca's hour,
And smiles upon their little son,
Child of the maguey flower;
Him only, Meconetzin, she
Enfolds upon her breast,
Whose honey-sweetness magicly
Weaves visions for his rest;

The mother-milk, with soft embrace
To Meconetzin given,
Now brings unto the Toltec race
All here they taste of heaven!

CIT. Well-pleased with song, enlivened by the draught,—
Thanks to you, sisters three! Let me repose
An interval among the ceiba's roots,
Before my pilgrim-staff is again in hand.

TL. Our garden, flattered by your dalliance here,
Is yours, good stranger, while you choose to stay!

TEM. Although unknown your name, be welcome here!

CIT. I am Citlalatonac; though, to you,
"The Burning-Star" is nothing but a name.

TL. Grave your demeanor! And my memory gives
Clue to Citlalatonac only as
The name of godhead, first supremacy
Above the heavens! Dustborn man are you;
Yet as a god should be received, I pray
Accept our welcome, which is all we have.
Within our cottage, sisters, let us turn
For cookery to cheer our visitor.

CIT. Grateful your kindness to my weary sense,
As this delicious turfage at the root
Of twisted ceiba; sweet be your return.

TL. Chimalman, leave your flowers; Temictli, run.
Fast are the hours, and far he goes ere noon.

(*Exeunt, the sisters.*)

QUETZALCOATL *(returning, sings.)*

Xochitlycacan,
I wander forlorn
Having tasted the fruit
Disobedience-born;
From Paradise thrust,
I, nor godhead nor man,
Find no pleasure on earth;
Xochitlycacan!

CIT. Thou, Quetzalcoatl!

QUETZ. Mortal, dost thou see
Ethereal god-shape? Who, I pray art thou?

CIT. A friend of mourners. What is your distress?

QUETZ. Friend, of such subliminal sense thine eyes
Thus to observe, when earthly grossness fails,
Some brother-god must hide beneath thy clay!
Not to the laughter of an idle god,
Would I betray my plight. Nevertheless,
Rightly you named me. Quetzalcoatl, I!
Alas! Was I not happy on the height?
What mischievous Tzitzimime accursed
Me, that a momentary flout of boyish pride
Caused me to overstep my sire's command?
Divine Rose-Garden, Xochitlycacan,
Above the thirteen heavens, waving soft
Hands of a thousand blossoms, at the feet
Of Tonaca-tecutli lord of all!
My father, Tonaca-tecutli, who
Smiled at the rivalry of brothers four,

The two Tezcatlipocas, black and red,
Huitzilopochtli, and unhappy me!
Alas! alone in disobedience,
Who from the merry sports of brotherhood
Was thrust and all the joys of Paradise;
Because, forsooth! from off the wondrous tree
At the garden's heart, covered with precious bloom,
The flowers of heavenly virtue, that delight
The eye unfadingly, which are forbid
Even the gods to gather from their stems,—
I! the one fool in heaven! Luckless I!—
Recklessly tore, in showers of roses off,
Flinging them earthward. Rashness, I repented
Too soon; but all the heavens were afloat
In roses! And my father seeing, frowned!
No word of menace; but his will I knew,
And step by step through heavens my descent
Trod on the flowers that ordained my fall:
The gray Tzitzimime, the spiteful women,
Laughed as they twined my roses in their hair;
And emerald-skirted Chalchiutlicue,
And Tlaloc, lord of rains, looked pitying,
For heaven's blossoms resting on the clouds
Informed the rainstorm with their fragrancy,
And earth as well as heaven knew my sins!
Theirs the delight, and mine the bitterness!
Below the thirteen heavens I have fallen;
No resting-place I find on earth awaiting
For, being no man, no earthly self is mine;
Immortal banned, no mortal hope have I.

CIT. Softens your heart by depth of loneliness?
Or does a glimmer pierce your darkling pride,
Of sympathy for grief your father feels?

QUETZ. Alas! That sting I do not dare to feel;
I dwell upon my own deep misery
Lest for a moment I remember his,
Who gazed on me with sorrow-darkened eyes.

CIT. Then to his pity may not you appeal,
Whereby to medicine your grief sincere?

QUETZ. Doubt not my courage, but I do not dare.

CIT. His anger still is menace, I presume?

QUETZ. Nay, his affection is too strong for rage:
I grovel in my sorrow at his feet
And dare not ask for pardon, knowing that
My careless sin betrayed how little love
I bore him, who so well had cherished me.

CIT. Renewed affection your excuses show.

QUETZ. Might he but know it is affection true,
More simple, more intense for his remove,
And not mere longing for the bliss of heaven;
Then would I plead re-entrance to his sight.

CIT. The lord of heaven would interpret truth.

QUETZ. Well might he doubt, when thus I failed before.

CIT. A loving son is readily believed. (*Discloses himself in brightness.*)

QUETZ. The Star that Burns! It is the Morning-Star!
Citlalatonac, thou? My father, here?
Thou, Tonaca-tecutli, come to earth,
Wherefore from heaven following the steps
Of thy unhappy offspring?

CIT. To perceive
If cankerous pride had eaten deep thy heart,
Or wert thou ready to return to heaven?

QUETZ. This much of pride remains; I could not bear
My brothers' taunts, the ridicule of heaven,
Should I return.

CIT. Remain until the scar
Of hatred heals; love can out-laugh the scorners.

QUETZ. Here have I no existence.

CIT. I perceive
A way whereby to bring thee unto men,
Teaching of heaven while your hopes revive.

QUETZ. Again the brightness of the Morning-Star
Burns without blighting on an earthly hill:
The sisters three approach, and I unseen
Await your will when bidding them farewell.

CIT. They shall be instruments for your release.

(*Enter Tlilli, Temictli, Chimalman, from cottage.*)

TL. Grave sir, I thought the garden was on fire.

CHIM. My roses are not withered!

TL. Did you kindle
A beacon, sir, to call a messenger?

CHIM. The rose upon his breast shines like a star!

TEM. How warm the air! as though midsummer reigned!

TL. I faint! Oh, sir, what fear upon me falls!

CHIM. His raiment sparkles now at every seam!

TL. Sir, have compassion!—

TEM. Call the king, I pray!—

CHIM. A thousand beams of lightning fill his hair!
TL. Where shall I hide? The light is everywhere.
TEM. It is the Sun-god here on earth revealed.
TL. My sin I know not —
TEM. Pride of mine, begone! —
Never shall I be Tecpancaltzin's queen!
CHIM. Around myself, some delicate breeze imposes
Relief from godhead. Hither, sisters, run!
TL. Farewell, Chimalman! Breath I hardly find,—
Upon the grass, I stumble,— Oh, I die! —
(*Falls to earth.*)

TEM. All the dark horrors of the sun's embrace
Deprives of motion; sisters, fare-thee-well!
(*Drops beside her sister.*)

CHIM. Alas! I see the brilliance, but feel not
The blast of death that has my sisters slain.
Temictli, raise your head! Alas! so dully
It rolls beneath my touch. Tlilli, look up!
Both dead? But, impossible! Oh, mighty lord,
Whosoever thou mayst be, help thou my two
Dearest of sisters, loveliest of girls!
CIT. Their souls already to the abode of death,
Unshining Mictlan, have discerned the way.
CHIM. Again the miserable brightness springs
Like a thin cloak about thee. Might it be
More like the sunshine, giving life again,
Than like the lightning fatal! Tlilli, dear!
Can you not lift your eyelids? Hark, Temictli!

A stir of feet along the highway comes.
Sisters, dear sisters, might you breathe again!

CIT. They build the cross, thy spirit mounts to mine;
Mourn for your sisters other time, my child;
Learn now what fate awaits you.

CHIM. Cold misfortune
Has chilled my hearthfire till the end of time.

CIT. Fate wills you, mother of a god to be.

CHIM. A woman's heart is prisoner in thy hands.

CIT. Only impurity is pressed away;
The gentle heart is warmed to life renewed.

CHIM. Women are playthings for the mirth of heaven.

CIT. One, who, in heaven spurned his birthright there,
And, fallen to earth, finds no admittance, begs
A mortal body for a penitent god,—
From Chimalman, whom maiden purity
As flawless blossom as in Tulan grows,
I find transfigured by this blow of fate
To likeness of the Rose of Paradise
Which I return, although so freely given.
Speak for thy sad despoiler, Heavenly Rose,
To the heart of Chimalman, until she sees
The floating Quetzalcoatl at her side,
Exiled from heaven, who earthly life desires.

CHIM. How am I suited for such mighty fate,
A simple maid, not worldly wise nor fair?

CIT. Fear not; although divinity appears
Again upon me in a shining cloud,
For thou hast shield against my majesty

In purity like fleckless mountain snow.
Not Tlilli, wise in home and courtly ways,—
No, nor Temictli, by her beauty queen,
Might thus endure my plenitude of power.
The pride of knowledge or of loveliness
Is chaff upon the winds of heaven's will;
But the kind heart remains, like golden grain
Gladdening the godhead more than a host of stars,
And the pure spirit is a kindred tie
Between a mortal and immortal sphere.

CHIM. Tlilli! Temictli!

CIT. They are far from thee;
Their bodily husks the grasses almost hide,
But Mictlan greets their souls, their truer selves.

CHIM. No more to see them!

CIT. When the blessed day
Dawns, when as mother, thou the god delight
By giving him a mortal residence,
Thou shalt be lightened of thine earthly woes
And dwell in heaven; thence to wander freely
Upward to paradise, where reigned thy son,
Or down to Mictlan where thy sisters dwell.

CHIM. Again we meet?

CIT. And never more be parted!

CHIM. Blessed the day —

CIT. Which heaven's blessing seals!

CHIM. Thy will is mine,—

CIT. No longer broken-hearted;

CHIM. My sacrifice —

CIT. New hope for men reveals!

(*Enter Quetzalcoatl, floating in the air, seen only to Chimalman, as a pale green wraith, or a floating emerald-stone.*)

QUETZ. (*Sings.*)

Xochitlycacan!
No longer I mourn
Thy vanished delights,
Nor wander forlorn;
The heart of a maid
Creates me a man,
For a while I forget
Xochitlycacan!

(*He vanishes.*)

CIT. A cloud in likeness of an emerald-stone
Enters the rosy lips of Chimalman.

CHIM. Do I breathe or no? The world transfigured
Lies about me. I had thought, to the heavenborn
Of little worth terrestrial scenes would be;
Yet my uplifted sense discerns a glow
Unseen before in daylight. A thousand forms
Above, below, in water or in air,
Within the earth, my startled sense perceives,
Sounds, delicate perfumes, thoughts, immensities
Of feeling; yet I feel not overwhelmed
With riches. Supernatural is the flood
Of spiritual life I now inhale;
But the clear purport of my blessedness
Drawn from the fountain of celestial light,
Far-streaming from Citlalatonac's form,

Is the fair vision of a floating god
Gazing on me with soft celestial looks
Of pleading for a birthright among men;
And the warm breath of one desiring birth
Mingles with his that is the Lord of Life,
Until bright heaven all my veins informs:
Alas! Mortality between two gods,
Maidenhood undefended, needs must yield.

CIT. A bride of godhead fears no earthly harm.

CHIM. Unearthly terrors still harass her way.
The face of Quetzalcoatl disappears!

CIT. Within thee, is he mystically born.

CHIM. Am I still Chimalman? May twain be one?
Or all unknown to me have I divided?
Too young am I such mysteries to know.

CIT. Knowledge from older lips has not polluted
Thy tender mind, at its maturity
Blossom-like soft, though ripening at the heart;
Nor has a wind of chill experience
Toughened the sapling, nor has sin attacked
The delicate buds of promise unfulfilled.
Perfection of simplicity and truth
Must have attracted Quetzalcoatl's flight
To thee-ward, the one excellent piece of jade
Worthy to grace the bosom of a god!
The one fair fountain undefiled, wherein
The Feathered-Serpent might regain a home
Without demeaning his divinity!

CHIM. Around my humble self a veil of light
Now gathers.

CIT. Evermore to cover thee,
Until the day of motherhood arrives
And heaven opens to receive thy soul.

(*Enter King Tecpancaltzin.*)

TEC. Tlilli! Temictli! Where are the maidens three
Herein who dwell? Are they destroyed by fire?
Pardon, grave sir! I saw your light afar,
And feared some accident to those who give
My mother-queen court-service in Palpan.
Before my vassals, I arrive, from dread
Suspicion of attacking enemies.
The youngest sister's here. What means the blaze
So suddenly extinguished, though so bright?

CHIM. It shines before you. Kneel to heaven's King!

TEC. Astonishment unloosens the stiff knees
Of royalty. I dare not further face
One, who in lightning clothes his majesty;
Yet is the simple maid more brave than I,
Monarch of Tulan, Tecpancaltzin, king,
Whom she has peradventure knelt before
Without my noticing a paltry child.
Serene her smile on him who dazzles me;
Her face reflects the glories that I shun.

CIT. "The Morning-Star" shines upon "the Green-Shield";
Citlalatonac's bride is Chimalman.
Her tender bosom shall become the nest
For the Feathered-Serpent, godhead come to earth,

When Quetzalcoatl, as her son, acquires
Life upon earth and place for penitence.

TEC. Peasant no more; but goddess, in the light
Reflected from divinity you wed!
I worship humbly before Chimalman.

CIT. A rose of paradise gleams in her hand,
As promise of the tender babe to be;
And thenceforth be her earthly name "The Rose,"
Xochitl, till she stands at Mictlan's gate
Demanding at my hand the promised key,
Opening to her the portals of all heavens;
Thus, who Citlalatonac has espoused,
May find in spirit immortality.

TEC. An altar to Xochitl shall be raised.

CIT. Not before death. Womanly must she dwell,
Protected by strong-handed men from harm.

TEC. Palpan, the palace fortress that a god
Founded long since, twice-hallowed now becomes
Enshrining her, whose bridehood with a god
The Toltecs shall discover and revere,
When Tecpancaltzin to his throne returns.

(*Rising.*)

CIT. Fare-thee-well, Chimalman! Midnight shall bring
My image to thy soul; the sunbeams carry
Messages from my heavenly height to thee,
Whom in the other world I shall await
Until thy faithful compact is performed.

CHIM. Brief is the smile of heavenly regard.

CIT. Earth is no dwelling-place for heaven's king;
Joys here abbreviated, shall renew
Sweeter for loss, in death's eternity.
(*He disappears.*)

TEC. Revives my courage as the brightness goes,
And heaven's lord to heaven's gate ascends.
CHIM. My childish tongue falters at loneliness
Never endured before, nor to be expressed.
TEC. Madam, your king awaits, your faithful slave.
CHIM. Gone is the moment of unfathomed love,
Gone are my sisters.
TEC. I behold them now.
Alas! of feebler mould than you were these!
CHIM. The snake beside Temictli! Frighten it
Away! The butterfly on Tlilli's hand!
Everything knows them dead except my heart.
TEC. Madam, the field of sorrow here informs
Your recent home with mortuary gloom.
Permit me hither to command my slaves,
That due regard your sisters may receive
From priestly hands. First, shall they be removed
Into the chamber lately echoing
Their girlish laughter; and a palanquin
For you shall, golden-tasselled, bring two maids
Upon you to attend, of noblest grade,
Worthy your state as Bride of Heaven's King.
CHIM. Kindness relieves impatient sorrow's thrall;
Go, and return as suits your friendly will,
Whose courtesies I quietly await

Alone with my dear Tlilli and Temictli,
Whom the far-spreading ceiba shadows now
From bright mid-morning. Not an hour away
Was their delicious rivalry of words.

TEC. Thus be your quality within my state,
Guarded till death as Tecpancaltzin's queen.

(*Exit Tecpancaltzin.*)

CHIM. (*Wandering up and down.*)
Hateful the robbery that silence makes,
Depriving me of the sweet melody
Awakened with their red lips' merry motion!
So pale their roses, and so dim their eyes!
Oh, grass, cover these forms unsisterlike!
Cold Mictlan's breath I feel, and hear their sighs
Acknowledging life's impossibility.
Shall I believe the keys of death and birth,
Together laid in my so-ignorant hands,
Can reunite us three in sisterhood?
Yet unto heaven they may not follow me;
Then into Mictlan would I gladly go!
How is it possible I am a bride,
And that soft floating form, I saw as god,
Stirs now within me into human life?
The bride of godhead, with his glory shrouded,
The trees our tent, the heavens my home to be,
And the bright hope of Quetzalcoatl's birth,
Are purpose of my being and its crown.
Almost again I feel that wondrous thrill
Of deity's illumination, through

My flesh transformed and my uplifted mind;
Flowers, birds, and trees, and the surrounding hills
Into one sphere of radiance commingling
By that soft flood of overflowing light,
Melt to the sapphire of heaven's perfect hour.

(*Sings.*)
Whom to regard, my sisters or my spouse?
Whom to believe, the vows of death or love?
Ah, might the former into life arouse,
Should I then so regret my lord's remove?

Unknown to me is love in earthly guise;
And death indeed is far more tangible,
Yet in his presence here I recognize
Proof of my love's exceeding miracle.

Beyond the skies ascends love from my heart,
While thirteen heavens between impose their weight;
Will he indeed some dream to me impart,
Whereby to find assurance of my fate?

How bright must shine the distant "Morning-Star,"
Citlalatonac, for Chimalman's gaze
Thereby to glean her promised strength afar,
To live the allotted span of lonely days.

On either hand a phantom shadows me,
With lifted vials of sorrow and delight;

Alternate showers of joy and misery
Clarify eyes for their celestial sight!

(*She bursts into weeping, raising her hands to the clear heaven; while a palanquin appears at the gate, and half-a-dozen male and female slaves enter. A maid wraps a gold-weighted mantle around Chimalman, whom she leads out of the garden to the litter's side.*)

(New York City, April 3, 1908.)

TECPANCALTZIN

List of Characters

Tecpancaltzin, *king of Tulan.*
The Teoteuctli, *or High-priest.*
Quetzalcoatl, "*Feathered Serpent,*" *foster-son of the king.*
Quetzalpetlatl, "*Feathered Carpet,*" *the king's daughter.*
Chalchihuitzl, "*the Precious Stone of Sacrifice,*" *known once on earth as Chimalman.*
Tlaloc, "*Wine of the Earth,*" *lord of rains.*
Chalchiutlicue, "*The Emerald-Skirted,*" *Tlaloc's wife.*
} *Aztec gods.*

(*Scene: The garden of the king, upon Palpan.*)

(*Enter the Teoteuctli, with the king's two children, Quetzalcoatl and Quetzalpetlatl.*)

Teoteuctli. Frolicest thou enough, Quetzalpetlatl?
Rest thou awhile with me, by the ceiba's shade;
While on the baby-god I wait, until
His foster-father, Tecpancaltzin, comes.

QP. Wert thou a butterfly, to play with me
To the limit of wishing! Rest wearies my bones;
My feet ache to be flying after the squirrels.
TEO. Words of a child are the flutter of locust wings,
Destructive to fruitful sense; but the words of eld
Like humming of bees discover the honeycomb.
QP. What is the daylight for but to play in?
TEO. Rest!
Would the flow'ret fade in the bud from excess of heat,
Ere prime of beauty and pride of conquest come?
QP. Little I understand in the storm of words
Blown from your cloudy beard; but I delight
In the soft laugh that Quetzalcoatl gives,
Making a period ever as you pause.
QUÉTZ. Smile, too, Quetzalpetlatl; are you sad?
QP. I would be playing! No. What sadness is,
I have heard tell of, but I do not know;
I am not sad, unless that means, "Keep still"!
QUETZ. How many years have I, oh, Teoteuctli?
TEO. Twice must you live to know the Kin-Katun;
Imix to Manik has your highness learned.

(*Quetzalcoatl counts on his fingers silently, then speaks.*)

QUETZ. My years are seven; yet I have been sad.
TEO. Sorrows of seven years are not so deep!
But the king approaches. Prince, I beg of you
Stray not afar, lest Chevinic from the woods
Rush to ensnare you! Quetzalpetlatl, heed

Your foster-brother's wish, till I return.
On Tecpancaltzin am I waiting called.

(*Exit Teoteuctli.*)

QUETZ. Girls are too ignorant to know of grief.

QP. I have wept my birdie's death, and cried for cakes;
On homebound days, I have outwept the rain;
Is this not grief?

QTZ. Not such a grief as mine;
I heard a word dropped by your grandmother
Unknown to me before, and knowledge sought
From an old gardener who said that I,
Being a god and fostered by a king,
Was yet the saddest little elf he knew;
Thenceforth a grief has held my seven years,
Making me feel more ancient than the priest.

QP. Dear Quetzalcoatl, laugh again with me;
For the Teoteuctli will berate me so,
Seeing your holy dimples filled with tears.

QTZ. I am not crying; why do you gibe at me?
Know you the magic word I learned today?

QP. Tell me!

QTZ. Two syllables, —

QP. And those are,—

QTZ. "Mother!"

QP. And only now, you learn that simple word?

QTZ. The priest kept still; I never knew I had one.
He only called me son of heaven's king.

QP. All men have mothers.

QTZ. I asked the gardener,
Who said that there are mothers even for gods,
And mine in heaven dwells; he called her fair.
Her name was Chimalman, "The Emerald-Shield."

QP. A fairy-tale, I am sure! You are the king's son,
My brother. We will ask the Teoteuctli,
If you and Tecpanpilli, gone a-hunting,
Are not my father's son in equal grade.

QTZ. A fairy tale? I wonder.

QP. Let us look for fairies.

QTZ. For fairies?

QP. Like the lily's chime,
Your laughter rings; already find you one?

QTZ. Fairies are felt, not seen.

(*Enter Tecpancaltzin and Teoteuctli.*)

QTZ. Father, what joy!

TECP. My darling child, run to the palace shade;
These sunny garden paths are not for you,
Where the golden lance of Iztli may transfix
Your rash intrusion to his hot domain.
Alas! my daughter! (*He sighs.*)

QP. Father, the day is sweet;
Yet everywhere I stumble upon grief.
You weep, and Quetzalcoatl —

TEO. But not I!
Gray-headed eld discards unworthy tears;
Wrong things through water look still more awry.

TECP. Play with your brother, child.

QP. Is he my brother?

TECP. Your only brother! Golden as the corn
Before the sun has singed its silken curls,
He is the pearl and wonder of Tulan;
Its only hope among black-headed churls.
Slave to his godship, he must satisfy
Your spirit's need henceforth. Inquire not why,
Tears stain my aged cheeks to speak of him;
Play as you will, while we discourse apart.

QP. Think you Chevinic hide within the hedge,
Striped and wild as chipmunks? Come, Quetzalcoatl.

(*The children wander through the garden.*)

TEO. A rumor reached me, lord, grievous for you.

TECP. For once, my friend, truth touched the lips of rumor.

TEO. Your son is dead?

TECP. With Tecpanpilli dies
All my ambition.

TEO. To be born anew
Bright-winged from the pale circle of despair;
My king is manlier than his speech appears.

TECP. No! Like a cloud driven by the winds of fate,
I feel and know some other grief awaits;
The spotted serpent, feeling its slow way,
Hisses a portent in the tangled grass.
My death means Tulan's fall.

TEO. Nay, but the girl?

TECP. Is but a girl, and softer than the most,
Made but for swans'down and the joys of life;
My only hope is the son of Chimalman,
Strong for his years, and intellectual
Beyond belief. He argues with me now
Quite manlike. Until Tecpanpilli died,
Jealousy bit my soul, that must perceive
Him thus superior to my real son;
When Tecpanpilli died, pride fell to ground,
With him, my only son!

TEO. No less admired,
Your royal son was, born of earth, than he
Called child of godhead, Quetzalcoatl, here.

TECP. The golden breastplate of my hope he was,
Crown of my conquest, and a second realm
Wherein I ruled far more enjoyably
Than in Tulan. My son had only fault
Of being human; otherwise I saw
No speck nor spot in his industrious mind,
That found out mischief ere it wisdom craved;
Though Quetzalcoatl be a paragon,
My joy and Tulan's hope were in my son.
These half-tamed tribesmen loved the boisterous lad;
And their assault on Quetzalcoatl threatens,
Deeming his advent luckless omen for
Prince Tecpanpilli and Tulan's estate.
Guard him, good priest, although my hopes be dead;
For grisly death sits beside Tulan's throne.

TEO. What stirs among the feathered pampas-grass
Like emanation of desires to fly?

TECP. The spotted serpent shivers last year's skin
Upon their roots, and crawls to vivid sheathe.
TEO. Have I again mistakenly discerned
The road by fortune most serenely trod?
These many days ago, a noble lord
Entreated that the feast of Tlaloc be
More highly honored with the sacrifice,
Not only of a thousand village babes,
But one more exquisite of form and mind
Than ever Aztec infant was revealed.
Could my refusal thus have drawn rebuke
From heaven and Tlaloc, stealing in the place
Of Quetzalcoatl immature, thy son
Prince Tecpanpilli? Might I choose again!
TECP. No, it is fate. Nor is the deed recalled;
The fatal spear, by other hand discharged,
That slew my son, was heaven's thunderbolt
Drawn to some misdeed of my own, not yours.
TEO. The children's sport disturbs my grieving king.
TECP. No, no! grief would drive mad in solitude;
The children may divert me. Bring them hither.
TEO. The townsfolk call our Quetzalcoatl god,
Forgetting Chimalman's inconsequence.
TECP. God in a man made visible, who knows?
Stranger than this is fate.
TEO. A godhead, he?
He is no better than a village brat,
Whom the kind hand of Tecpancaltzin decks
In shining garments like his royal son;
Dreadful his horoscope.

TECP. Tell it again.

TEO. Fame has discovered that his grandfather
First drained the maguey's juices, and his fate
Is thus foretold by the holy oracle:—
"Son of the maguey shall be Tulan's king;
Soul of the maguey shall be Tulan's fall."

TECP. Drunkenness is disgrace, the riddle reads;
Strait be his path, and Tulan is unshaken.
Look where my daughter and he play together!
What is it that he sees?

(*The two children run towards King Tecpancaltzin.*)

QTZ. A spirit comes!—

QP. I see it not.

QTZ. Or goddess more divine.

QP. Where is she?

(*Enter Chalchihuitzl, floating.*)

QTZ. Tremulous as a bird's wing beats
My heart, and I pant to run into her arms.
Oh, magical warmth! Oh, wonder! Who is she?

QP. Humanity dims my sight. Where is she seen?

CH. Child!

QTZ. Where is the meaning?

CH. Son!

QTZ. Oh, no!
Is it my mother thus that I behold?

QP. Father, he raves! The sun deludes his eyes.

TECP. Be silent and observe.

TEO. His eyes are stars.

(*The two men kneel to the right and Quetzalpetlatl kneels to the left of Quetzalcoatl; Chalchihuitzl bends above the boy, having been once his mother, "Chimalman."*)

CH. The precious stone of sacrifice, am I,
Encircled by the kindly care of heaven
For that soft deed which consecrated me,
My body being a doorway unto earth
For him, a god, who is now a little child:
Son! Does there linger in your ignorant heart
One trembling fibre to proclaim you mine?

QTZ. Mother! Why, it seems, I had always known my mother!

QP. Out of the sunshine come, dear Quetzalcoatl.

QTZ. My mother shields me from his evil rays.

TECP. My son, your mother is not here today.

QTZ. Assuredly she smiles upon me now.

TEO. Children who contradict are worse than wasps.

QTZ. There is no question, for her hand is laid
Upon mine own. Silence! she speaks to me!

TECP. Shelter your fear within the palace walls,
Quetzalpetlatl! You are all I have.

QP. Can he perceive what I do not? I run.

(*Exit Quetzalpetlatl.*)

TEO. This grove of cypress and entangled vines
May shelter us.

(*The men rise and retire to left background.*)

TECP. A shiver in the grass
Murmurs a fear sepulchral. Sit here beside your king;
Oh, kindly guard of wisdom's treasury,
My peer in kingdom of long years are you!
Listen to the little god! I look in vain,
Her to behold whom he as mother calls.
TEO. It is hallucination of the heat;
Or we mistake, from gross mortality,
This apperception of diviner things.
TECP. Were it but true, and Chimalman alive;
Might Tecpanpilli, too, return and speak!
QTZ. My mother!
CH. Little son!
QTZ. A plain old man
Taught me that word today,— only today!
CH. It called me from beyond the gates of death;
Your lisping voice was heard by all the gods,
For a child's heart can rise through thirteen heavens,
Above omnipotence in tender power.
QTZ. Suppose I had not called?
CH. You had not seen!
Often have I observed you, like the moon
O'erhanging your small meadowland of life
At intervals; but like a slumbering flower,
You took no notice of the caressing face,
Until, today, some fortunate breeze shook off
The dews of sleep, and the flower saw the moon.
QTZ. The more I know, the more I then shall see?
CH. Deeper the world appears to the widening mind.

QTZ. Is heaven fair?

CH. A solitude of peace.
Where he who wed me is a god eterne;
My sisters two gaze upward from Mictlan
And often woo me to that dark abode,
In sisterhood renewing earthly joys;
But loneliness invades the realm of heaven,
And loneliness abides in calm Mictlan:
Eternal life, eternal death, I know;
But not the embraces of my little boy.

QTZ. Ah! Return hither!

CH. Sacrifices may
Never be offered twice, nor be recalled.

QTZ. See, I am lonely, too. I learned today
Of sadness and my mother. I attain
Manhood and dare to ask with you to go.

CH. My little man of seven years! There spreads
A labyrinth of fortune at your feet,
To make mankind more happy and more wise!
Heaven is ever open to your sight;
The gods await your beckoning command;
Here is a sacrifice for you to make,
Still to abide among base-thinking men
And lead them nearer heaven ere you go.

QTZ. My thoughts are weary, climbing up to yours.

CH. Arise in arms ethereal! Lay your head
Shining so godlike through its case of clay
Upon my insubstantial breast, and strain
Warm thrilling hands around my formless arm.

(*Chalchihuitzl lifts her son to her bosom.*)

TECP. He rises like a moth into the air.
TEO. Tremble to worship in his presence dread.
QTZ. There always seemed a lack,— I knew not what,
Until this precious moment brought you here.
CH. My bird has reached the nest he never knew,
And hungry were my arms him to enfold.
QTZ. Today I learned of sadness. Now, I know
What happiness may veritably be.
TECP. The naked sun a cloak of cloud puts on.
TEO. Shall we retreat before the rising storm?
TECP. Deserting thus a child? I tarry here.
QTZ. Who comes?
CH. Two friendly gods.
QTZ. And jewels of rain.

(*Descend from heavy clouds above, Tlaloc and Chalchiutlicue.*)

CH. Their treasury is limitless; for, see,
First enters Tlaloc in his trailing robes
Of filmy gray, and feet with lightning shod;
Followed by her who rules the waters, binds
Her emerald skirts beneath a rainbow zone,
And leaping diamonds star them like the skies.
They sing a lullaby for you and me,
And every tree sends pattering echo up
For little man who sways in mother's arms.

CHALCHIUTLICUE. (*Sings.*)
Comest thou, brother!
From the palace foursquare?

From the tumult and smother
Of courtiers, and glare
Of their torches, among the amazing
Dark mist of their armament hurriedly raising?

TLALOC. (*Sings.*)
Comest thou, sister!
From Tlalocan paced
Beside me? Whom lustre
Of spirit has placed
Co-monarch of clouds, in your shining
Convoy of subtle green serpents entwining?

CHUE.
Thou comest! To follow
Where, in the deep azure
A goddess has traversed the hollow
Abyss, there to trace her
Soft presence, and warm the dull air
Lest she die of an earthly despair!

TL.
Thou comest! To warn her
No goddess abides!
Heavenflung is the cry of the mourner;
Where godhead resides
In the heavens above sorrow and cloud,
Nor remembers how death weaves a shroud.

BOTH.
Shadowy courts of the Rain-King!
Shattered are vases four,

And showers of pearls are breaking
Among oceanic uproar
Where the serpents of lightning wallow
Along each riverbed shallow.

CHUE. Tlaloc! The valleys smoke unto thy praise!
TL. Chalchiutlicue! Rivers reflect thy serpents' ways!
CHUE. Our crashing cymbals re-echo along the clifts!
TL. Each slave of ours his rainy vase again uplifts!

CHUE. (*Sings.*)
Upon earth's ancient altar-stone,
The daylight's sacrificial fire
Relumes each heart, that would atone
With prayer as all its hopes expire;
The hand of fortune lifts a blade
Whose purpose have no tears gainsaid.

TL. Oh, fonder mother of thy child,
Whom she in nursing has not lost!
Chimalman is the victor mild
Though death from motherhood divorced;
Oh, heaven itself resigns to her
The key to entrance everywhere!

CHUE. We are passing with the clouds, Chimalman!
Hasten thou! The daylight of gods only shines
Momentarily, lest the earth dissolve in its glory.
CH. I must return. Boy, I adore! As a storm

In the mountains beats thy heart!
As the depth of heaven, my love for thee
Surrounds, imbreathes, eternally beyond
Storm-stress or heart-yearn, thee awaiting, son!

TL. Incense of earth, the grateful land is sending
Bird-song and cattle-cry of thankfulness;
Chimalman, god-wed, thou art claimed afar!

CH. Grateful am I, that he who wedded me,
God though he be, forbids not to remember!

CHUE. (*Sings.*)

Iztli has rent the sacred veil
By Tlaloc grayly woven,
And freshly warm his darts assail
Though the heart of earth be cloven:
His sharpened lights for sorrow poise;
Too bright for death's behooving
Is that open breast, whose tender joys
He may not smite for loving!

TL. (*Sings.*)

Tlillan enthrals the murky crew,
Whom Tlaloc summoned hither;
Serpents of Chalchiutlicue
To purple cloudland gather;
Oh, ancient altar-stone of fate!
Whereon forever trembles
Some victim! Bolts of Zuiven wait,
'Neath which the altar crumbles!

(*Exeunt upwards, Tlaloc and Chalchiutlicue.*)

CH. As they withdraw along the brightening hills,
I must desert my smiling son awhile.
QTZ. Mother!
CH. But not forever! For, today,
The sceptre of a king I give to you;
The priest and king approach. Slip to the grass,
Dear baby, and confront them as a god.

(*Tecpancaltzin and Teoteuctli come towards them, as Quetzalcoatl reaches the ground.*)

TEO. My lord, the shining grasses steam with death:
Let me assist you to the palace gate.
Now for the first time, I know you divine.
TECP. Child! Is the mother gone, you dreamed about?
QTZ. No, she approaches you.
TECP. I see her not.
CH. The King of Tulan drained his cup of pride
While slipped two katuns through time's fingertips;
Children and wife, and slave and man-at-arms,
Have kept his sovereignty inviolate:
But the pale clutches of impatient chance
Upset the beaker! Wife and promising son
Have entered Mictlan's sacred land of death.
Oh, Tecpancaltzin, greedy of a crown!
Are you to govern a deserted home?
Think of the son whom Mictlan shelters now!
TECP. Ah, Tecpanpilli! Why does all desire
Die when remembering your departed youth?
QTZ. My mother speaks to you.

TECP. Ah, was it she?
Death would I far prefer to lonely state.
CH. As Chimalman laid merry youth aside
To bring Lord Quetzalcoatl into life,
So shall you lay aside an earthly crown
For him and Chimalman, to follow forth
Your heart's desire, your son, into Mictlan.
TECP. Dreary is death; but Tecpanpilli died.
TEO. My lord! Regard your health! For circumstance
Of royalty forbids denying life;
Desertion, no vicissitudes excuse!
CH. (*Floating nearer.*)
My chilly palm caresses from your brow
The furrows that a crown has there impressed.
TECP. Weariness like a shroud envelopes me.
(*Tecpancaltzin sinks to the ground, and dies.*)

TEO. My king!
QTZ. Oh, mother! Cure my fathers' ill!
CH. Your heavenly father has proclaimed you king.
TEO. Furious serpent, sliding through the grass,
A jewel hast thou sheltered in thy fangs!
Insidious death! Tulan so poor appears!
The king is sleeping surely! I run for aid!
Lord Quetzalcoatl, leap into my arms,
That I may shelter you and help the king.
QTZ. Father?
TEO. He hears not.
QTZ. Mother!

CH. He is blessed.

QTZ. He sleeps?

TEO. And wakens to his murdered son.

QTZ. He wakens not!

TEO. Alas! You are the king;
For Tecpancaltzin mourns his son no more,
And I must hide you, ere the Toltecs know
Their mutinous land is governed by a babe.

CH. Farewell, sweet son! In kingly pride, remember
Your mother still she is, in heaven who dwells!

(*Exit Chalchihuitzl.*)

QTZ. How sweetly he is smiling.

TEO. Little god!
Such smiling rises to us from a depth
No living man can penetrate and know.

(*Enter Quetzalpetlatl.*)

QP. Have spirit-visitors gone, Quetzalcoatl? —
Father!

TEO. Silence, dear children, and together kneel
As I entone a prayer to bless his sleep!
Then must our fugitive selves escape, before
The brutal rage of sudden-wakened men.
Alas, the oracle who spoke of you;—
"Son of the maguey shall be Tulan's king!"
Besides the reverend and tender man
Whose fostering hand uplifted Quetzalcoatl
From the unmothered infant's pitiful bed
To couch as kings do,— promise, little man!

That as he lived, you will desire to be!
Lest that unhappy oracle prevail,
And "Soul of the Maguey shall be Tulan's fall."

QTZ. I love my father, and his will is mine.

TEO. Repeat: I promise!

QTZ. Such I promise too.

(*The children, at the old man's imperative gesture, kneel.*)

TEO. (*Chants.*)

Great Tonaca-tecutli, who has used
Weapon so weak to lower upstart men,
We prayed to keep a well-loved king. Refused,
A spotted serpent draws him to Zuiven.

Proud fangs of death! Spurning the monarch's crown,
Soften thy clutch upon his human soul;
Lest errant fact, by practice overthrown,
Deform its promise of celestial goal.

And he, whose winged childhood climbs the height
Of empire, by a moment's wizardry!
Be he confirmed in wisdom and in light,
Securely faithful to the divine decree!

(*He rises, takes a child by each hand, and walks dejectedly away.*)

(New York City, May 21, 1908.)

TEOTEUCTLI

List of Characters

QUETZALCOATL, "*Feathered Serpent,*" *king of Tulan.*
TEZCATLIPOCA, "*Smoking Mirror,*" *his heavenly brother.*
} *Aztec gods.*

TEOTEUCTLI, "*Divine Lord,*" *pontiff.*

HUEITEOPIXQUI, "*High-priest,*"
TEOPIXQUI, "*priest.*"
} *His attendants.*

NACA, "*Flesh,*" *the victim.*

QUETZALPETLATL, "*Feathered Carpet,*" *foster-sister of the king.*

ILANTLI, "*Old Woman,*" *her grandmother.*

OME, "*Second,*"
YEY, "*Third.*"
} *Toltec girls, attending Quetzalpetlatl.*

(*Scene: — Interior of a small temple, placed on top of the pyramidal Teocalli, in the outskirts of the royal city.*)

(*Priests and People seen passing before door, around sacred terrace, bringing statue of idol, newly-dressed for the spring festival in its honor.*)

Priests and People. (*Outside chanting.*)

Scarlet was the robe he wore, the great Tezcatlipoca!
Shield and arrows in one hand; in the other, a lance of justice!
Terrible his frown, beneath a crown of partridge feathers!
Now is the earth renewed! Now are the rains descending!
Like earth to continual showers, his heart grows soft to our pleading!
Aside he flings the bloody mantle of justice, standing
Midnight-black, and wound with gold as the clouds with lightning!
Divinely black, as the marble image which we worship,
Decking with golden bracelets, breastplate, ear-rings, hair-cord!
Precious things, bestowed in the treasury of his power,
Emeralds swing from the lip and shine over its dark body;
Glass in the sockets resembles twinkling eyes of heaven;
The mirror of truth, adorned with golden feathers,
Waves in its shapely left, outholding the right hand to mercy!

(*Quetzalcoatl enters the temple, with Teoteuctli and two priests who carry idol to its shrine behind the altar. They step aside, while Teoteuctli speaks:* —)

TEO. Fortress of justice, in garden of mercy, thou!
Tower of strength, Tezcatlipoca, thou!
He will answer your supplications, oh people!
Fearful as squirrels? Never Tezcatlipoca!
Harelike timorous? Never Tezcatlipoca!
Like squirrels his foes, and run like the hares to cover;
Fear is unknown, and peaceable thoughts are flouted,
When he observes the foes of the Toltec nation,
Abiding in Tezcatzontli to answer worship.

PRIESTS. The long processional returns his image
Hung with new jewels, robes, and the wreath Toxcatl!
Five were our days of fasting, ten of preparation;
Bring we hither the year-long feasted victim,
Treated more kingly than kings in the name of godhead.
Blackened our bodies, aping Tezcatlipoca!
Sweet is our faith, as that recalls him hither!
Slaves, rejoice for a day, recovering freedom!
Maidens smile, as permitted to bring the offerings;
Youths delight, racing to win the maidens!

TEO. Turn now, Hueiteopixqui, who attends me,
Taking your brother priest to bring the victim;
So may he bear our sins, and cleanse the people!
So may Tezcatlipoca bless our battles!
Return, attendants, to the shouting highways
That festival here may attain completion
In sacrifice. Remain, Lord Quetzalcoatl.

(*Exeunt the two priests.*)

QTZ. Ten weary days have assailed my ears, with pipings
Of your pernicious flute. From the singing birds
I heard in the god-loved fields, am I recalled
Merely to praise your minstrelsy, my friend?
TEO. Hastiness of your ignorant youth, my son,
Compels the senseless word. My flute appeals
To listening deities momentously,
Winging on pleasant tones to their abode
And bidding their attendance here, as we
Shall celebrate Tezcatlipoca's feast;
Your presence, too, my magic flute demands,
By man's estate becoming Tulan's king,
To learn the rites and worship at the shrine.
QTZ. Why to a brother, in an idol, bow?
TEO. Tut! tut! The festival is for a god.
QTZ. Son of a god, am I!
TEO. A pretty tale!
Yes, I remember how your mother died,
Branding your birth with murder of herself
By the innocent struggling child. Nevertheless,
Her dreams of heaven, and the words of him
Who lately ruled us, Tecpancaltzin, rouse
Nought of belief in one who knows the world,
Save as a simple tale of a maid beguiled.
QTZ. Like Chimalman, of heaven have I dreamed;
On Chimalman, my mother, gazed in sleep;
Although my birth brought her release from life,
And her clayborn ensheathement saw I never.
TEO. Clayborn are you, though heavenly was your sire,

And clayborn man is he, that is Tulan's king;
More reverently hold your tongue in leash.

QTZ. As king and dreamer of the gods, I dare
Command your flute for breathing by my lips.

TEO. Sacrilege!

QTZ. I am a priest.

TEO. Novitiate
Of seven years is yours; and at fifteen
You are a priest indeed, with a godlike look,
And heaven within your eyes, where the spirit peers
Into a world beyond its earthly frame;
Shall spirit purge your carnal lips enough
To sound a flute, that summons up the gods?
Age has attempted my humanity,
Sorrow has purged me, though no god am I;
You, Quetzalcoatl, are afire with youth,
And all the pride of monarchy attained!

QTZ. My throne is Tecpancaltzin's memory;
My sceptre is the counsel that he gave;
My godhead spells a mother's tenderness.
Of kingliness or spiritual power,
Occasion shall approve me the possessor;
Untried by sorrow or experience,
All the warm fires of youth that you behold
Burn but for worship, and this clayborn frame
Only an altar is, that shall decay!
Such sacred flame, as life is, grows more bright
Aspiring towards heaven's brilliancy,
And youth, in music finding fuel renewed,
Beams purer exaltation towards the gods,

Lend me the flute, oh, Teoteuctli grave!
The song within my heart must be expressed.

TEO. Take it. Such music should delight the god;
You move my heart. I love you like a son.
Falls like a cloak my age, when I behold
Your wondrous youth, that half rejuvens me.

(*Gives the flute to Quetzalcoatl.*)

QTZ. A double voice I crave, to pipe and sing!

(*He plays on the flute.*)

TEO. Ah, but a chime of bells you must have hidden
Under your arm!

QTZ. None have I.

TEO. Surely 'tis so.
How can my flute of clay such melody find?

QTZ. Tezcatlipoca, as a brother scowled
Across my childish thoughts; but not of him,
My visions are. For roses overflow
To eastward and to westward, from a tree
Immense and wonderful, that once I saw,—
Where? Ah, but where? Such roses! More divine
Of scent and hue than fancy might achieve
Or barren reality discover here.
Ah! Where, I say, do roses such as these
Reveal themselves? Music shows the flowers.
Unrealized comes sorrow. Could I steal them?
I feel a taint of sin debasing me
From some imperious crime, unknown before,
Prenatal, and a mystery clouds my sense,—
Of what? How came I here? When did I know
That paradise? Oh, hideous blank of birth,
What curtainest thou from my bewildered mind?

Teo. Give me the flute, my son; before your fingers
Break it, in heedless groping after truth.
It is the god who holds converse with you.
(*Forcibly takes flute out of Quetzalcoatl's hand.*)
Qtz. No, not Tezcatlipoca! But I see
My father! And he does not storm at all.
Only his eyes, his terrible shining eyes,
Look down from heaven's uttermost pinnacle
On me; though nothing do I read therein
Save love, so great, so wonderful, I reel
Beneath it. Strengthen thou my earthly mind,
Eternal father, Tonaca-tecutli,
Citlalatonac, distant Morning-Star!
For now I stand revealed, even to myself,
Thy son! Memory crowns me! Reason speaks
That earth should know my godhead;
Love discerns what love alone reveals,
The truths of spirit. All this world of hate
I fear not, nor doubts of ignorant men.
The perfect love of the pellucid soul
Is more than life or death or memory,
And recreates the etherial atmosphere
Of heaven around that soul in clay encased,
Until it understands its destiny
And the forgotten facts of other worlds.
Teo. My son, control your raptures; or retire
From out this teocalli's holy height,
Where my superlative position makes
Necessitous the decking of its shrine
And offering sacrifice. A moment comes,
That holds no place for song.

QTZ. Forbid me not
To exercise such offices as king
As should beseem me. Quiet locks my lips;
But ignorance profound delays my hands.
TEO. Enlightenment shall come. Hark! where approaches
The long processional around the hill,
Along the teocalli's rectangle,
And up the sevenfold stairway towards this door;
While the reluctant victim treads between
Worshipping ranks of people, who have blessed
With every granted wish his vanished year
Of happiness, that now must culminate
Godward, with the libation of his blood.
QTZ. Death for a human being, must I witness?
TEO. Such is Tezcatlipoca's hallowed law.
QTZ. Can you the "Heart of Heaven" contemplate
Believing such to be? No, if my brother
Be terrible, the God of Gods is kind;
Knowing this murder, I should interfere.
TEO. Not yours, but mine, the teocalli's power;
Avoid displeasing me, Lord Quetzalcoatl!
For not your godhead, nor your sovereignty,
Defend you from the punishment I mete.
QTZ. They come.
TEO. Silence! Nor dare to interfere!
It is the royal grandmother, Ilantli,
With whom Quetzalpetlatl, too, appears,
The princess who, some claim, should rule Tulan.
(*Enter Ilantli, Quetzalpetlatl, Ome and Yey.*)

ILAN. Hail to you, arch-priest, and to shades of kings,
Although no king here guards a queen dethroned.
QP. Grandmother, quiet you! No queen is here;
Even as my father willed, no rank have I!
ILAN. (*To Quetzalcoatl.*)
Sir, you have bidden us from the convent's close
Hither, to wait your will as prisoners
Whom these eight years have weakened and subdued
Into obedience. Think you, I forget
Years of my queenship in Palpan? and later
Years of queen-motherhood, when early died
The pretty wifeling of my son the king?
So Tecpancaltzin turned to me for aid,
Until that hapless morning when,—deserted
By whom, who knows? — village-bred Chimalman
Prated some tale into the kindly ear
Of Tecpancaltzin. She one year forsooth
Kept him at arm's length, till the baby came
Who crowded our fertility of joy
With strange and hopeless thistles of deceit,
Till punishment was dealt her by the gods;
Passed Chimalman, whose sky-spun veil of dreams
Lifted her bodily to heaven's hill.
TEO. Madam, the iterance of the copper bell
Upon your bracelet likens well these facts.
ILAN. First I respected her, pitied the babe,
She dying with his entry into life;
And threescore years forgetting, I became
Mother again in feeling, offering you,

Lord Quetzalcoatl, equal place with those
Half-orphans, Tecpanpilli and the girl
Quetzalpetlatl,—having then no hint
Of the ingratitude which would appear
Callous in manhood. Malice of the gods
Slew Tecpanpilli, while you were a child;
Tore from Quetzalpetlatl every armor
Against your proud ambition? Have you brought
Shackles to symbolize our captive state,
Or may we still walk fetterless before you?

QTZ. Mother, I have in tutelage been myself,
Seven years, upon Mount Coatepec, secluded
In a calemac as rigid as the tomb;
Barely a day, received great Tulan's crown.
Meseems but yesterday, I did entreat
Your presence here, but absence chilled regard.

IL. Tyrant, as stepping-stones use not our necks,
Easing the ascent to Tecpancaltzin's throne.

QTZ. In deed or thought, has friendship been betrayed?

IL. Why did your childhood not make evident
Its malice silencing our tongues in death?

QTZ. I strove to right such injuries when noticed,
Opening your prison with my sovereign key.

IL. Insolent priest, whose robber-hands bestowed
Her crown upon Quetzalpetlatl's slave! (*Starts to box his ears.*)

TEO. Ilantli, pride to madness quickly glides;
Your shrilling tongue ill becomes such a place:
Tezcatlipoca frowns! Be silent, woman!

(*Ilantli and Quetzalpetlatl withdraw towards the entrance at left.*)

Swing now your golden censer, Quetzalcoatl,
Whose savors of sweet herbs appease his ire!
And, maidens, bring your offerings to the gods
While priests approach with the human sacrifice.

(*Ome and Yey approach the altar.*)

OME. (*Sings.*)

Fairer than ivory carven with human fingers
These grains of rice appear;
Richer than weave of women, the color lingers
On high-piled blossoms here.

YEY. (*Sings.*)

Sheaves of maguey blossoms, like the cold
Flowers of frost, I found
In the mountain, overseen by the heavenly fold
Where blossoms of stars abound.

OME.

Urns, whose lips run over with pearls of grain,
Whose ample hearts are full
With blood of the pulque, I offer. Nor disdain,
Oh, god, the gifts I cull!

YEY.

The garland Toxcatl adorns thy blackened breast;
Oh, frightful one! Perceive
Us humble! Let the month Toxcatl attest,
Our gifts thou wilt receive!

Teo. Maidens! In heart and gift, the god delights!
Received are prayer and portion; and I bless
As proxy for the god your tender years:
Retire, that further worship may ensue.

(*Ome and Yey withdraw into background; Teoteuctli busies himself at altar; other women remain silent; Quetzalcoatl paces before the altar swinging his censer.*)

Il. (*Aside.*) Years that have fled, where are you? since I stood
A maiden at Tezcatlipoca's shrine,
Offering gifts like these, and turning found
The king beside me smiling beneath his crown?

Qp. Ay! ah! Grandmother, that was long ago;
Perchance the gods walked earth at that great day.

Il. They say, one walks here now.

Qp. Is it readily seen?

Il. His lordship, Quetzalcoatl is received
By some,— who is not I! — as veritable
Son of unearthly Tonaca-tecutli,
And god himself.

Qp. Some one laughed in his sleeve.

Qtz. Godly my nature, sister! Fear you not;
One day my powers will be known to you.

Qp. Pardon, my lord; I meant not to offend,
But the golden god is oversmeared with clay.

Qtz. You are my sister; should I be enangered?
Where is not godlihead by friends despised?

Teo. Impose dark silence on your parrot-chatter!
Stint not your converse at the proper time,

But here be reverent to our ceremony,
The people's shout arises; the victim comes;
Retire, Ilantli, and you maidens three
Into the background. Quetzalcoatl, kneel
Before Tezcatlipoca, and entreat
Lest your forgetfulness have made him wroth.

QTZ. Kneel must I, to my brother? No, unto
The distant gods of heaven, I will kneel,
Entreating seals of their approval for
A better era, when an innocent smile
Shall be their worship, and not death nor fear!

(*Teoteuctli walks to door in background, as Quetzalcoatl bows before the altar.*)

QTZ. (*Prays.*) A wisp of spirit to my body clings,
That would be flying heavenward by its choice!
Of god it is, and if a god it be,
Grant me, Eternal Father, past the stars
To draw my inspiration pure and cold,
That every deed may be instinct with good
And every thought lift heavenward my soul.
Life is a fog, wherein one light must guide
Of perfect reason and unswerving truth;
And the immoderate hands of murder raise
A horrid cloud around the trembling flame;
Not in the name of god, can murder thrive.
Oh, Powers beyond the Stars, make potent him
Who fain would shrive this temple of its crimes.

(*He rises.*)

(*Enter Priests, carrying Naca in a crude cage.*)

PRIESTS. (*Chant.*)

Tezcatlipoca! Of this mighty land
Of Tulan, mightiest god! Now, by thy grace,
Life and the means of living are my own;
Mercy impart for my laborious hours,
And fill me with thy bounty. Pity me!
So sad, so poor, neglected and alone!
I sweep thy temple; take my griefs from me!

TEO. Before the god, throw every care aside;
Thorns to the brazier, griefs to heaven give!
Ye come, my two attendant priests, with him
Whom the bright earth delivers in her stead
To the devouring vengeance of a god.
Alas! that so our sins must be atoned;
But earth has fed, ere she destroys, her son.
Before the idol, bind him on the cirque
Of mystically-carven altar-stone.

(*Priests bind Naca, half-naked and prone, upon the altar.*)

Art thou prepared, oh, Naca! for thy fate?
Hast thou been happy in this passing year?

HU. The ninefold lords of midnight wait for thee!

TEOPIX. Bid thirteenfold farewell to the lords of day!

NACA. Where is my straw-roofed cottage? Where the eyes
Of her, who mourns me by Lake Tezcuco?

HU. Has not the maguey blossomed less beauteously
Than the fragrant robes, your peasant self put on,
Rendering sweet the produce of the soil,

Ere given to Tezcatlipoca's hand?

TEOPIX. Happiness paints your countenance, that so
Your blessed death reprieves a sinful land.

NACA. Happiness? Yes! From enemies to flee;
But Tezcuco unseen my longing draws.

TEC. Hither! The god is hungered.

HU. Remove his robe!

TEOPIX. Mictlan receives the monarch of a year!

NACA. Ah, but one year of bliss! How many years
Laborious in bitterness, I mourned
For comforts! Might I but again put on
Life with distress, I should not so complain!

HU. Upon the altar thrown —

TEOPIX. With limbs bound tightly —

TEO. (*Taking knife, and suiting action to word.*)
Lifted is the sacred flint, and the scarlet flower
Blossoms upon his breast, and the hidden jewel
Lies at the glaring idol's cruel foot.

(*Naca dies, as the Teoteuctli, severing with a dark-bladed knife of obsidian the victim's breast, tears out the human heart.*)

Spirit to Mictlan, heart unto the god;
Such sacredness as to his corpse may cling,
Deliver to the people, that they may
Thereby a portion of his fortune know.

(*Two priests carry out the still-palpitating corpse.*)

QUETZ. Horrible moment!

TEO. Silence, till they go,
My two attendants, and the victim move;
The god has feasted, and is satisfied.

ILAN. Lift up your head, my trembling granddaughter!
His body consecrated to the sun
A year-long willing sacrifice awaited.
QP. I had not looked on death —
QTZ. Torture her not!
Between your palms, hide your soft gaze,
Sweet sister; like you, I cannot abide
A brutal murder as a virtue praised.
TEO. Keen critics are the young; but for advice
Turn to a graybeard. What fair offering
Instead, Lord Quetzalcoatl, shall you find?
QTZ. Flowers like the stars of midnight, and sweet thoughts
Reflecting heaven, and acts of charity
Wherein the gods may find an earthly sphere.
(*A butterfly alights on Quetzalpetlatl's shoulder.*)
TEO. Puerile gifts that any child may bring;
To those who give life, life we should return.
QTZ. Life of less costliness than human then:—
(*He catches the butterfly.*)
It takes too many precious years of growth
And lessoning to make a perfect man;
But would you sacrifice a life indeed?
Behold, this butterfly at fingertip,
Barred with the colors of the rainbow! See
How in my fingers break his delicate wings,
That leaflike fall upon the terrible feet
Of black Tezcatlipoca! Now, the keen
Point of a golden pin shall prick its heart:
Such is the sacrifice I bring alone.

QP. Death! Is there nothing less a god desires?
QTZ. A butterfly might ransom thus a man!
TEO. Peace! Is this place for fooling? Duties call
Lord Quetzalcoatl from profaner jests.
QTZ. Wearisome grows my crown! Yet, tell me them?
TEO. This day from the seminaries come in train
Maidens and youths, from childish chains released
Of ignorance and feebleness, by touch
Of the sacred years. This day gives liberty
From heart to heart, its perfect will to speak.
Tezcatlipoca's month, lovely Toxcatl,
Permits the flower of love to find perfection,
Before the heat and storms of summer come.
The nation's marriage month! The height of spring!
And the sacrificed heart of him, that lately died
Before this statue of our dusky god,
Is merely symbol of the sacrifice
Of a nation's heart, upon the altar-stone
Of the world, doing his mighty will in all.
Now, might Lord Quetzalcoatl do a deed
Worthy his gracious power, having by will
Of the almighty gods an earthly throne
That was another's by the right of birth,
Withheld from him by death's untimely hand;
The realm of Tecpancaltzin was the right
Of Tecpancaltzin's son, who died so young,
Leaving as heirs, his aged grandmother
And the one lovely sister who survives:
So near to you in years, Lord Quetzalcoatl,
Quetzalpetlatl is,— your very names

Were by that dead king's single thought conferred!
Well might "The Feathered Serpent" find repose
Upon "The Feathered Carpet." Beautiful
To other eyes is she; what guise to yours?

QTZ. Marriage is a duty laid upon mankind,
Keeping its passion in accord with heaven;
But, to a god, is mating possible?
What spiritual bride awaits in heaven,
Whom might I here displease by lower loves?

TEO. Then shall Quetzalpetlatl pass unhonored
Into the convent's shadow; while the joys
Of her father's court, in the accustomed past,
Make melancholy all the years to come?

QTZ. Sweet was her countenance to infancy;
Her childish fingers guided me a child
Almost as large along the palace halls;
My comrade and my sister! Do I seem
To disregard your honor? Nay, indeed,
Remain as Quetzalcoatl's queen, and rule
The female half of the kingdom; and if not
As wife, console yourself, for in my heart
No other earthly form usurps your place.

QP. I am content. I feared you had forgotten
Her, whose own brother dying, now regards
You doubly brother, and like father, too.

QTZ. Shadow may come across your guileless brow
Of some enchanting figure now unknown,
And your untroubled heart new throbbing learn;
If such thing be, make known your thoughts to me,
And the bond that is no marriage shall dissolve;
Your happiness I look for, not my own.

QP. The gods of love have overlooked my heart.
QTZ. Yet fear not in the future if they strike;
Confiding speech shall cure the hidden pain.
TEO. Your words are not so wise, Lord Quetzalcoatl;
But time has altered things for many a man.
QTZ. Then you would have me marry?
TEO. As the state
And your own happiness demands it,— Yes!
QTZ. Marry I will, when these four omens come:
When on the oaktree, chestnut burrs appear;
When in the west, the sun appears to rise;
When over ocean's tide, men walk dryshod;
When singing nightingales shall raise a beard:
Then shall I know the time indeed is ripe,
For Quetzalcoatl to find marriage-yoke.
TEO. His words are foolish; but my lord is young.
QTZ. Only Quetzalpetlatl shall receive
Protection, such as sisterhood demands.
ILAN. Small redress this to gain for a stolen crown.
QP. Could I rule alone? Kingship is not my rôle:
I thank you, foster-brother, and retire
Whither you will.
QTZ. Palpan is wholly yours,
Fortress and palace, and the lovely land
Of Tulan shall no wish of yours withhold.
QP. Grandmother, scowl not! My delight is yours;
Queen-mother still you are. Ome and Yey,
Attend me as your custom was at school:
Brother, I will at Palpan wait your will.
OME. Way for the princess!

YEY. Quetzalpetlatl comes!

(*Exeunt four women.*)

TEO. Delay you here?

QTZ. A moment with the god.

TEO. Anger no further, for the lightning-bolt
Of his disfavor might, with you, enthral
My faithful self. I leave you to your prayers.

(*Exit Teoteuctli.*)

QTZ. Brother, how comes it, that a god enchained
Should, as a human creature, kneel before
Your senseless image with unshaken faith?
Brother, if genuflections must be mine,
Not to the idol but the god I kneel,
And claim an answer from a brother there.
How trod we heaven, what games together played,
Forgetfulness still cheats me of. Alone
In dreaming of the gods, discover I
Godhead myself and claim your brotherhood.
By Zuiven's height, and Mictlan's deep abyss,
By Tonaca-tecutli's mutual love,
From marshalled hosts of heaven, I summon you:
Tezcatlipoca, as a god appear!
A shadow clouds the teocalli's height,
A brilliancy invades the inmost shrine,
A voice of thunder, and a breeze assails;
And, brother to a god, I face him here!

(*Enter Tezcatlipoca.*)

TEZ. Son of the heavens, forbear to use your powers!

QTZ. Wherefore? In dread of comrades of the past?
TEZ. You feared return to heaven.
QTZ. Did I so?
TEZ. The baby loses what the spirit knew.
QTZ. Frighted of heaven's roses, was I then?
Oh, blessed memory, lift high the veil!
TEZ. Thief out of heaven, how dare you to assail
Unsullied brothers with your fallen plea?
QTZ. Humanity has stolen heaven from me;
Return I shall, if thence I truly came;
But fearful am I not, of gods or heaven.
TEZ. Forbear!
QTZ. Discern you not a warning, too,
Whom I nor fear nor worship, and have called
Hither most honorably to inform,
Henceforth no bloody mimes of murder shall
Ascend from Tulan's worship at your shrine?
TEZ. Forbear!
QTZ. Between my heavenly father and my soul
Such ties of love remain,—no guilty act
Of sacrifice shall intervene to gods
Less worthy worship and less amiable.
TEZ. Forbear! A brother's anger in a god's,
Innumerably strikes on earthly scenes!
QTZ. Fear is unknown to me; teach me its guise.
TEZ. To heaven, I go; to earth, I shall return;
A god's revenge will poison your delight.
(*Exit Tezcatlipoca.*)

Qtz. (*Sings.*)

The wind of east, the wind of west,
  The winds of south and north may blow;
Of body bruised, but spirit blest,
  The son of man on earth must go!

The great wind-voices call to me,
  Earth-bound as man; and now my soul
Arises like the great winds free,
  To spheres beyond their rude control.

I touch the Universe's brim;
  The secret of the stars I read;
And past all heavens I climb to Him,
  Who is the Lord of Life indeed.

With men, I taste of pain and care,
  While battling with dull nature's hate;
With gods, a sturdy soul I bear
  To foil the fourfold winds of fate.

(*Exit Quetzalcoatl.*)

(New York City, June 14, 1908.)

XTACUNBIL XUNAN

(The Hidden Lady)

The Hidden Lady's eyes are chalices
  Wide-open, drinking in the honeyed views
Of temple corridors, all white with peace
  Save where are scattered, through the still purlieus,
Statues like retributions, hard and strange,
  With faces of grave spirits militant,
And carven glyphs along the walls to range
  The painted visages of god and saint.

The Hidden Lady opens with each flower,
  To the first glimmerings of morning light
Seething across the forest, like a shower
  Of feathers from Kukulcan's wings in flight,
As the tremendous godhead cleaves the tides
  Of darkness, and the lesser tribes look up
From wattled huts, where human weakness hides,
  For one long draught at his reviving cup.

How frames the Hidden Lady, all day long,
  Those glowing hours into her life serene?
She kneels beside her loom, and times a song
  To the rapt weaving of her shuttle clean;

She moulds fresh biscuits from the shredded grain,
Whose tithéd flakes oblation are designed
For Kukulcan, whose altar stands within,
Ever attended by her suppliant mind.

The Hidden Lady passes to the porch,
Whose cloistered pillars mark her kingdom small,
While her still spirit, like a faithful torch,
Fills the dim sanctum of the oracle;
She sits and broods beneath a ceiba tree,
Where doves may coo a word into her ear
Of the surprising thoughts of deity
Working its will above this mundane sphere.

Sometimes a roll of maguey scrip unrolled
Shows the fantastic outline of a god,
Not as she dreamed of him, a cloud of gold
Ethereally illumined, lightning-shod;
But the pale tracery of some brother-priest,
Knowing a deeper mystery than she,
Who sees Kukulcan like a man, released
From frailties of our mortal misery.

(July 14, 1914.)

ZUBAK

(The Flute)

While my untutored fingers strive to range
The flageolet's intricate labyrinth
Of holes and keys, pitfalls to clumsiness,
But ceaseless wells of melody for skill,—
Remembrance brings the blackbird's fluting near
On Mosholu, when Maytime meadows bloom,—
Or summer's yellow-warbler, perched a-peak
The Jersey-pine's new bud in Central Park!

How many generations of the birds,
Red-winged and golden-breasted, have made sweet
The jocund May! How many buried seeds
Have shaken cone and tassel to the spring!
How many paradises of the year
Bloomed to the sun's touch, ere I footed earth
And untaught fingering of my flageolet
Endeavored to repeat the piping bird!

Bright heaven above inspires to minstrelsy;
Indian and white man, who before me came,
Loved the same hills and almost the same trees;
And the soft flute of poesy takes up

The strain a flageolet cannot achieve!
Bright heaven above is like a crystal bell,
Repeating all the chimes of history
Rung out by hardy hands departed long!

(May 7, 1908.)

TO WILLIAM H. HOLMES

(Master of Archæology)

Proud Uxmal's height is crowned with towers
  Uprising from a forest-net
  Gigantic, that brings wondrous freight
Of architecture's primal powers;
Who strove with rod of patience here,
  To measure ruined slopes of doom,
  Balance the records of the tomb,
Reveal the ancient atmosphere?
The dovecote's crumbling solitude,
  The altar trenched for sacrifices,
  And art's most heathenish devices,
Were prizes of solicitude
  To William Holmes, who thus could write
  Prose epics, precious, erudite!

(June 23, 1916.)

TO EDWARD H. THOMPSON

(Cacique of Chichen-Itza.)

"Lord of the Wells of Itza"! Inspiration
You bring my poet-soul for fresh creation
In skyey mirage, where the bubble blue
Re-stages oldtime dreams in bright review:
You took a city, ruined, desolate,
A graven gem of undeciphered date,
  Lost in the jungle's tropic isolation;
    You raised an empire from oblivion's fate,
  Revivified its shattered history's clue!

Token of chieftaincy, the jaguar's claw
Of horrid ivory, came to overawe
Tame spirits with the wild's imperial breath,
Borne from the jaws of full-fleshed furry death;
You brought it to the halls of Washington,
Sweeping the past into our ken, reknown
  Its mystery-webs of fate in old-time law,—
    Ix-chel's design of rainbow radiance spun
  For the compelling cry of Mayan faith.

From Chichen-Itza's stone arises Pop;
Brown Uo, declining Zip and Zodz mount up

The thrones of twenty days. Beaked Zec and Xul,
Fresh-flavored Yaxkin, and re-instinct Mol,
Follow the year's aphelion. Ch'en replies;
New-feathered Yax, white Zac, and Ceh arise;
Mac, yellow Kan-kin, crested Muan, slope
To brightening summer. The drum of Pax replies
To Kayab's turtle-roll, and Cum-ku's rustling maize.

The Bacabs four lift into turquoise skies,
Golden processional of time's device;
The Lord of the Ascendant leaps to prime!
Ik, Akbel, Kan and Chicchan bring a chime
Of day-bells. Cimi comes, and Manik then
Sets Lamat upright. Muluc, Oc, Chuen,
Eb, Been, Ix, Men, Cib, Caban, Ez'nab, time
Cauac, Ahau, Imix, Xma-kaba-kin,
Into the Brazier's open orifice!

Conquest destroyed the year-count; but restrained
From damage, frail clay-objects ruin-stained,
Dug from the dewy earth. See, the symbolic pipe
Of springtime here displays life's fountain, ripe
With onward progress, borne by unseen hands
Where the enthroned disc of light commands
Futurity upon the wind-cross, pillar-chained,
Upon the slavish head of earth! The type
Of tribal hope in resurrection stands!

Whom Maya wasted, Chichen-Itza brings
To hail a milder day, cenote springs

Of purer drainage, from the toiling hands
Of your swart laborers. Your thought commands
A better era on that ancient field
Of idol-worship, whose carven relics yield
Thompson-Ahau, their best cacique! The wings
Of quetzal hover, as the jaguar's shield,
Slaying the serpent-thought of heathen lands!

(May 9, 1916.)

TO PROFESSOR MARSHALL H. SAVILLE

New England's son! Marshall Howard Saville!
You, my friend! Ardent delver in fields of the past!
Who drags from the forgetful dust such cleverly-carven work,
Tools of the artisan, hewn marbles, moulded potsherds,
Tracing by the lamp of genius that wonderful defaced scroll
Of the ages, hidden by civilization to render itself immortal!
From the cross-fashioned chapels of Mitla, "City of Death,"
To the "tolas" of the Scyri of Quitu, the jewels of beauty,
Truth and love, expressed by the self-devotion of peoples
On natural earth, sentient to God in her orbital passage through time,
You have collected, inscribed, ticketed, properly placed in museums,
Interpreted, and described for the wonder of lesser minds!

Sturdy toils and patient wonder-work of science
Preserve from the past all but the fugitive soul! —
Where goes that soul? Does it live in the maguey
records,
Traced in daring linear fantasy, by Aztec scribes?
Lives it in the exquisite bas-relief of Itza kings,
Lofty-crowned, adorned with many-tasselled garments,
Calm of countenance, whom the dreamy worshipful
design
Of the Itzapalapan sculptor framed in columns
Of stone-craft, with hieroglyphs of the noble ruling
race?
Lives it in the altar overthrown by jungle-growth,
Or the sculptured heads of Izamal teocalli?
The voice of thought fills not those lips of stone!

But a dream, a mist of hope, an unimaginable spirit
Influences the glyph-strewn panels in the temples of
Palenqué,
And the totemic macaw or cockerel scatters,
Throughout the future, spirit-seed for the forest of life!
The fugitive soul, rebound in the shackles of faith,
Returns to its ancient home, to its reverenced altar,
Returns to its one-time ways, and renews its oaths;
Forgetful of hope to be saved in Christ, our Saviour!

Jewel, dark of eye, purple with the utmost heavens,
Overlimned with crescentic corruscations,
Comes into my wondering thought, a gift from the dust,
Buried by obstinate love of life in a tyrant monarch;

A thought of kings, dark with their own libation of crimson drops
Upon that jewel called life! Buried in the dust! Revived
With the " Sheaf of Ages "! Bound by immortal souls,
Themselves the harvest sown again by death!

Ensheafed at the cycle's end, by Mexico's turbulent ruler,
Bound up were all the nation's spirits of purpose,
Enscrolled for the vision of truth in clarification;
So at Tulan's fall, the curbed and brutal people
Led by the Lord of Hell, Tezcatlipoca,
Burst from the merciful leash of Quetzcalcoatl,
And changed from insubstantial tribute of fading flowers
Again to the magnificent festival of death,
Pyramided in suffering human flesh;
Twelve centuries ago!

The wandering tribesmen
Placed stone on stone, laid pedestal, named the years:
Tochtli, for the leaping rabbits of time;
Acatl, for the cane-grove of fertile earth;
Tecpatl, for the obsidian, needle-edged knife of death;
Calli, for " the house above " preserved by the Father of All
To his uplifted faithful-hearted children.

A thousand years passed not, before the deliverer
Sped like a golden wedge from the eastern dawn-gate,

Leading the Christian-manned caravels of wider hopes,
And militant angels protected from gray-rushing waters
The stems of its innocent ships. Warned by prophetic dreams,
Arose the trembling cacique, uptwirling his fan of feathers,
From prayers intoned within Chapultepec's palace
Overlooking the lakeland surrounding Mexitl's city,
And called the faithful souls of his feudal tribesmen
Into the god's embrace; amalgamating the cities
Into one empire, upborne in stately oneness
Tenochtitlan, with Tezcucan and Tlascalan sisters,
Garnering tribute from Oaxaca to Chihuahua.

"At the end of the thirteenth age," so came simultaneous
Prophetic forewarning from lips of many priesthoods,
North and south, from Cholula's hill, from Mayapan,
And all unknown to them far south another one sang
Before the courts of Incas from Pachacamac's altar:—
"So will the white men come out from the eastern brightness,
Born of the dawnlit foam, breasted above the billows
Of utmost space, in glory of gold and ships onrushing."

Montezumatzin strove then, with utmost rite
Of twisting wizardry, to spin out a weft
Of immortal war, breathing its bitter purport
Upon the Mexican winds. Where soon his faithful subjects

Festered away in mine-damp for Spanish lust,
Fell Montezumatzin, fell his gilded court,
Fell the exquisite flower of intellect
Which prophetically pierced the depths of coming doom.
But their "sheaf of years" forever bears to future
A woeful tale of bitterness in resolve,
Their fury of worship before the low, obsolete,
And repulsive idols, supposed symbols of lofty ideals,
Hallowed by a spiritual mirage of vain, deluding dreams.

Ignorant these, of the perfect and loving Godhead,
Whose erring children stumble on towards truth,
Bred in the whiteness of His holy love,
Whose Image anew in the leaven of Jesus' words
Should recreate sweetness of life in the soul humane!

Beyond them the centuries rolled; the world grew lovely,
Cherub-cheeked, whirling joyward in blue abysses of heaven:
But evermore the tightening scrolls entwisted;
Ever the "sheaf of years" drew near to its day of doom!
Can it be true that theoretic reincarnation
Self-explains the mysterious ways of men?

Viceroy and slave, Aztec captive and Spaniard,
Long have reposed in the fraternity of death;
Five hundred and twenty years from premonition of conquest,

In the year of Our Lord, one thousand nine hundred
and fourteen,
Re-wakens the blast of death, like the opening door of
a furnace,
Sweeps through the mountainous borders of Mexican
statehoods;
Popocatepetl, Jalapa, Uxmal, Tehuantepec, Tulan,
Like a human volcano, arouse to onswept revolution,
Torn from the silver chains of civilization.

On Torreon's field a pyramid of human bodies,
Heaped by the hundredfold, commemorate return of
passion;
Brother fights brother, till the tale of death be told!
Diaz gone, the master of the white man's rule,—
Madero comes,— murdered by the tools of Huerta,—
Villa drives out Huerta,— Carranza outlaws Villa,—
Zapata overawes the southern country,
Relinks their trap betraying friends of valor;
A thousand battle-fields yield up their record
Of brave lives idly thrown to the dogs of hell!

Are they soldiers of today, who thus brutalize them-
selves?
Are they not rather the men of Montezumatzin,
Building again that mighty "sheaf of the years"?
Unconsciously re-obeying commands of primeval idols,
Dimly returning to the code of life, lived long before
And forgot, reborn to a gentler dispensation?
Be there troubles ahead in another half-millennium?

Can they ever remember, and break these oaths of evil?
Must ignorant souls be slaves of eternal error?
For these, such as these, came Jesus, the Living Saviour!

Upon earth's other hemisphere, what tale runs loud
Of Assyrian oaths re-lived? Egyptian bondage
Renewed, in the unremembering souls of reborn vassals?
Think they of human loves? By these, were they bound in old time!
Think they of worship? By faiths, are they long forsworn!
By their primal, instinctive emotions, was the ancient bond
Woven, to preserve tyrannical status in tribal law!
By these, were they to remember, being reborn! By these,
Sin comes again, reborn unrestricted instinct!
What is a man, but — man? Highest of animals,
If he control not his soul, humanity fades!

Reborn as a beast would be, in the unchanged mould,
Primitive mind is untaught, in spite of the schools;
Cro-Magnon of instinct, shame-hid in trammels of speech;
Hindu in symbols, their debased meaning forgotten;
Assyrian of culture, by absolute worship of self;
Egyptian in luxury, desiring all physical joys;
Greek in perfervid life, yet fearful of dreams;
Roman, the slave of resurrected gods of passion:—

Forgetful are such, of Jesus Christ, the Pure White Doorway,
Giving the Star to Truth, opening Life to wisdom,
Saving all men in Him, destroying the gyves of knowledge,
For "One who ruleth His own soul is greater than takers of cities"!

(May 5, 1916.)

STORM ECHOES

The storm of souls crowd up the sky,
  To beat at heaven's gate their wings;
Nor ever stops one heart to sigh
  For vanished homes and passionings.

Where are their pulses of desire?
  Where the dim beauty of their youth,
One moment crowned with battle-fire,
  Distorted to the ghost of truth?

The battle-rage is blown to dust,
  The carnage dead like memory;
And, colder than the snowdrift's crust,
  A storm of souls crowd up the sky!

(March, 1916.)

The shadows of the great gods rise,
Tearing the gates of Paradise
  With passions great and strange;
Bewildering on earth and sky,
They struggle with humanity
  And mighty hopes derange.

Amid the din of trampling feet,
A voice too pitiful and sweet,—
  For archangel devised,—
Comes like a bird from utmost heaven
Amid the storm of passions driven,
  The little weeping Christ!

One man! — One God of tenderness!
To break the terrible duress
  Of ancient evil's chain:
How clean have men those temples dressed
Wherein the Living Lord is blessed,
  When Christ shall come again?

He overtrod the glistening stars,
In days like these of hideous wars,
  To plant a golden leaven;
Thou, mighty, loving, tender Christ,
Who makes with every heart a tryst
  In the vestibule of heaven!

(February, 1916.)

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